

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #25

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, July 16 for a 48-hour period. An aerial survey of the Bering River District was conducted last Sunday under generally poor conditions. Another survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown today.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, July 16 for a 48-hour period. **Fishing time may be reduced for Monday's opening of the Copper River District if aerial surveys indices are below anticipated in today's aerial survey.** The cumulative sonar count to date is 1,095,287 fish whereas the minimum anticipated count to date is 574,234 fish. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 48-hour period that closed on Wednesday, July 11 is 135,100 sockeye salmon with 461 deliveries reported. This compares to an anticipated harvest 59,300 sockeye salmon for this period. The Gulkana Hatchery sockeye salmon harvest contribution from the fishing period that closed on July 7 was 37%. For the week ending July 14, the Western Copper River Delta survey count was 16,300 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 10,700 sockeye salmon. During this survey observational conditions on the Copper River Delta were poor. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown today.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open for an 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 16 with an additional 84-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 19. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60° 20.00' N., 147° 26.59' W. to 60° 14.75' N., 147° 35.35' W. to 60° 02.50' N., 147° 44.41' W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest for the period that closed on Wednesday, July 11 was 12,200 chum salmon with 35 deliveries reported.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding Bettles Bay Subdistrict, excluding waters south of a latitude line at 60° 46.10' N., and excluding the **WNH SHA**, will open to commercial **drift gillnet** harvest for an 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 16. Anadromous stream closures within the WNH THA will not be in effect during this fishing period. Effective from 8:00 am, Monday, July 16 to 8:00 am, Wednesday, July 18, regulatory closed waters pertaining to the Coghill River, as specified in 5 AAC 24.350(6)(B)), will not be in effect. Commercial fishing will not be permitted within the bed or channel of the Coghill River at any stage of the tide.

The Coghill River weir passed 544 sockeye salmon yesterday, which brings season cumulative escapement to 44,943 sockeye salmon versus a minimum anticipated goal of 13,867 fish. This cumulative escapement satisfies the midpoint of the Coghill River sustainable escapement goal. An estimated 1,500 sockeye salmon were observed below the weir this morning. Preliminary estimates of commercial harvest from the 48-hour period that closed on Wednesday, July 11 are 142,600 chum, 19,000 sockeye, and 6,400 pink salmon with 394 deliveries reported. Cumulative CPF harvest estimates to date are 1.42 million chum, 333,900 sockeye, and 14,000 pink salmon. As of July 14, PWSAC estimated 187,000-238,000 chum salmon for WNH broodstock escapement. PWSAC's chum salmon broodstock goal is 216,000 fish.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District, **excluding the AGZ**, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 16. Time is being reduced and open area is being maintained to limit the harvest of wild salmon migrating through the district, while still providing harvest opportunity on remaining MBH sockeye salmon run entry. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, July 10 was 19,100 chum, 53,700 sockeye, and 11,200 pink salmon with 360 deliveries reported. ADF&G otolith contribution estimates are now available for the Eshamy District commercial fishing period that ended on July 8. Preliminary estimates result in a harvest composition of 39% hatchery and 61% wild stock pink salmon, with a wild stock harvest estimate of approximately 12,200 fish. Of the estimated 7,900 hatchery pink salmon harvested for this period, 100% originated from VFDA's Solomon Gulch Hatchery.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 16. Harvest from the 36-hour fishing period that closed on Tuesday, July 10 is confidential.

SEINE FISHERIES: Aerial surveys of the Eastern, Northern and Southeastern districts are scheduled for the coming week. Early season indicators of wild stock chum and pink salmon run entry and escapement in the Northern, Eastern, and Southeastern districts are behind anticipated numbers and therefore do not support a wild stock fishery at this time. VFDA completed cost recovery fishing on Wednesday, July 11. VFDA estimates approximately 50,000 pink salmon at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery, and another 200,000 to 300,000 fish at the head of the Port. VFDA's broodstock needs are approximately 346,000 pink salmon.

The CPF harvest estimate from the 14-hour period in the Eastern District on Thursday, July 12 is 605 sockeye, 695,200 pink and 1,000 chum salmon with 190 deliveries reported. ADF&G sampling of CPF harvest from Rocky Point on July 12 resulted in an estimate of 49% female. ADF&G sampling of CPF harvest from Jack Bay on July 12 resulted in an estimate of 48% female.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters in the Eastern District, north of a line from 61° 02.855'N., 146° 44.204'W. to 61° 02.373'N., 146° 43.407'W. to 61° 02.992'N., 146° 39.165'W., will open to commercial fishing for 14 hours on Sunday, July 15 beginning at 6:00 am. Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 23.00' W. longitude will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point **will not be in effect** during this fishing period. Area at the head of Port Valdez is being restricted at VFDA's recommendation to allow for protection of broodstock that has not yet keyed in on the Solomon Gulch Hatchery. Area in Valdez Arm is being restricted to allow for wild stock chum salmon escapement in Galena, Sawmill and Jack bays. It is anticipated that there will be daily fishing periods for the near future, with daily announcements providing time and area specifications for the following day's opener.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 16. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice. No harvest was reported for the 60-hour fishing period that ended on Wednesday, July 11.

The waters of Sawmill Bay, including the AFK Hatchery Terminal Harvest Area (THA) and Special Harvest Area (SHA), inside of the newly defined THA line from 60° 03.66' N. lat., 147° 59.11' W. long. to 60° 02.77' N. lat., 148° 01.00' W. long to 60° 02.76' N. lat., 148° 01.66' W. long. will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 16. It is anticipated that daily 14-hour fishing periods will commence on Thursday, July 19 to better account for daily chum and pink salmon harvests. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 60-hour period that ended on Wednesday, July 11 is 1,900 sockeye, 5,000 pink and 11,600 chum salmon with 7 deliveries reported. ADF&G otolith contribution estimates are now available for the Southwestern District commercial fishing period that ended on July 8. Preliminary estimates result in a harvest composition of 73% hatchery and 27% wild stock pink salmon, with a wild stock harvest estimate of approximately 1,000 fish. Of the estimated 2,700 hatchery pink salmon harvested for this period, 100% originated from VFDA's Solomon Gulch Hatchery.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing** (SAAC 39.130(c)(10)). Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled PURSE SEINE salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Sunday, July 15. The next scheduled GILLNET salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 18.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.